Dear Families:

This week, we went for a walk in the neighborhood to practice observing and collecting natural loose parts for an art project. Natural loose parts are found pieces of nature such as acorns, stones, pine cones and shells. (They are likely the *found* materials in your child’s pockets!) Loose-parts play is an exploration that includes hands-on, concrete learning experiences.

Some of the children noticed different types of pine cones, while others collected different kinds of flower petals and leaves from the ground. The children then sorted their collections and shared any extra loose parts with their friends.

Today we focused on creating **ephemeral art**, which is artwork that is temporary and created with found materials. Ephemeral art allows children to identify, sort materials and plan how to use materials that they have collected. These are early science skills!

Creating art inspired by nature encourages self-expression and fosters creativity. It also fosters the development of **divergent thinking skills**. Often referred to as lateral thinking, divergent thinking is the process of coming up with multiple, unique ideas or solutions. We combined science with creativity to extend the learning and create beautiful works of art that we’ve placed on our front walkway for you to see.

You and your child can make ephemeral art at home by collecting natural loose parts from your neighborhood or local forest preserve. Join your child in creating ephemeral art in public places. This is a great activity to keep young hands busy while waiting for appointments, friends or the bus. As your child explores and creates with loose parts, the learning will happen naturally. If you are lucky, you may find ephemeral art popping up in your own backyard when you least expect it!